

these promotions “creates a ripple effect through the force that makes us far less ready than we need to be.”

Do you hear that, the Senator from Alabama? The Secretary of Defense is saying that what you do makes us far less ready than we need to be at a time when China and Iran and Russia are all causing all kinds of security problems and threats.

But Secretary Austin also emphasized another point, a very important point: The Senator’s stonewalling is having consequences—bad consequences, heart-wrenching consequences—for our military families. By blocking these promotions, the Senator from Alabama is blocking pay raises for these officers and their families. By blocking these promotions, the Senator from Alabama is blocking military kids from starting at new schools, setting them back in their educations.

When a member of the military serves, their family serves, too. Does the Senator from Alabama understand the disruption and chaos he is causing for military families?

These are people serving us. They are not political. They have worked hard. They have done a good job. They got a promotion. A promotion means moving—a change of venue, a change of school. It means a career path—how long you have been at one rank and then to another.

The Senator from Alabama is playing havoc with so many military families, who are nonpolitical, who have served our country well, who thought they were ready for promotions until this cruel act of the Senator from Alabama stopped them. These military families have done nothing—nothing—to deserve the disrespect and disdain shown by the Senator from Alabama. It is insulting to our servicemembers that one Senator—just one—is holding up what has long been a routine and non-partisan process.

Again, I urge my colleague from Alabama to think this through and stand down. We understand he has passion on the issue. We disagree with it vehemently; so do most Americans. But passion on the issue is not an excuse for causing havoc in the military in terms of force and in terms of the lives of the families.

I would again plead with my Republican colleagues, whether it is public or private, to go to the Senator from Alabama and dissuade him from his folly.

BUDGET AND DEBT CEILING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on the budget and debt ceiling and “show us your plan,” House Republicans are themselves starting to see why their attempts to threaten default to secure spending cuts has been a terrible idea from the start. It is not only reckless; it is not only dangerous—it turns out they can’t even follow through on it.

This week, the chairman of the House Financial Services Committee

admitted that he doesn’t even see a path to an agreement for lifting the debt ceiling, and at least 16 Republicans have never voted to raise the debt ceiling at all, even under President Trump. That is true.

But the problem here isn’t that there isn’t a path. Of course, there is a path. It is staring Republicans in the face. The solution is what we Democrats have said from the start: Instead of threatening default, instead of brinksmanship, Republicans should work with us on a clean extension of the debt ceiling. We did it three times under Donald Trump. We have already done it under President Biden, and we should do it again.

If Republicans want to push a separate discussion on the budget, that is their prerogative. In fact, it has been done many times by both parties in the past. But the Republicans would be reckless to take the full faith and credit of the United States hostage in order to force a conversation on the budget, particularly when there is an alternative tried-and-true path that has been used before: Separate the debt ceiling and raising the ability of us to pay our debts and discuss things on the budget—on taxes and on spending—which we always do. It is tying the two together that is reckless.

So it is becoming clearer and clearer to Republicans themselves—even those in the House—that the only legitimate path forward is this: Let’s have a bipartisan and clean extension of the debt ceiling, as we have done many times before, and then Republicans can push a separate discussion on the budget.

The American people have listened to us. A month and a half ago, I started telling the Republican leader: Show us your plan.

President Biden, HAKEEM JEFFRIES, and many others have joined in on that call, and it is resonating from one end of America to the other. Of course, you can’t sit down and discuss something if you don’t have a plan. Speaker MCCARTHY just says: Let’s meet. But what are they going to do—discuss the weather? the rearrangement of the furniture?

Come on. Do it the right way.

You are beginning to see what we have said all along—that the best way to do this is with no hostage-taking, no brinksmanship on the debt ceiling, but with a strong, avid, and passionate discussion on spending issues—one separate from the other.

House Republicans cannot show us their plan, and as we said—as I predicted 2 months ago—a month and a half ago—it is going to be very hard for them to get 218 votes on any plan.

So come on. Look in the mirror. See what is going on, and do it the right way.

Speaker MCCARTHY, today is March 30. It has been long enough. You still haven’t come up with a single specific cut that makes any difference in the debt that you want to do. Show us your plan. Drop the brinksmanship. Join Democrats on a clean extension of the debt ceiling.

LOWER ENERGY COSTS ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, finally, on H.R. 1, the House is expected today to vote on Republicans’ partisan, unserious, and so-called energy package that they call H.R. 1.

First, once again, I want to make it clear: H.R. 1 is dead on arrival in the Senate, not because of politics but because it is so ridiculous and has been drawn up by a bunch of pro-oil Senators who have no regard for anyone else. No Democrat has been consulted. Obviously, the Republicans knew that in the House when they passed it, but they seem to want to go back. In H.R. 1, they go back to the MAGA supporters back home—the big oil companies, the oil wildcatters, and so many of the oil States that don’t want to pay any taxes and that don’t want anything to do with moving us forward as the climate gets worse and worse.

The Senate is not going to waste our time on a bill that sets America back decades in our transition to clean energy. All it takes is a brief glance at H.R. 1 to realize it is just a giveaway to Big Oil. House Republicans’ so-called energy package just guts important safeguards, environmental safeguards, on fossil fuel projects. It would lock America into expensive, erratic, and dirty energy sources while setting us back more than a decade on our decision to move forward on clean energy, which this Nation fully supports. Transmission, of course, is hugely important to increasing access on clean energy, but the Republican plan hardly even mentions it.

So, again, the way to do this, Republicans in the House, is in a bipartisan way. We have a Republican House. We have a Democratic Senate. No party is going to be able to jam its way through without consulting the other side. That is true on the debt ceiling. That is true on the budget, and it is certainly true on H.R. 1.

There are Republicans in the House and Democrats in the House, and there are Republicans in the Senate and Democrats in the Senate who want to sit down and do a serious energy package. We need to do it. Let’s stop this brinksmanship. Let’s stop this political game-playing. Let’s stop this throwing of bones to the MAGA hard right, which represents, maybe, 5 percent of America. Let’s roll up our sleeves. Let’s get down to work and get something done on energy and on so many other issues.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

FIRE GRANTS AND SAFETY ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the